

In the Claims:

OK  
to enter  
09/17/03  
1-6 (Cancelled)

1 ~~7~~. (Previously Presented) A method of identifying a compound that increases the activity of an endothelin converting enzyme (ECE) polypeptide, the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE polypeptide in the presence of said compound; and  
detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ ,

wherein a decrease in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound increases the activity of an ECE polypeptide.

2 ~~8~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~7~~, wherein said ECE and said A $\beta$  are in a cell.

3 ~~9~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~7~~, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

10. (Cancelled)

6 ~~11~~. (Original) A method of identifying a compound that has anti-hypertension activity but does not cause an increase in the level of A $\beta$ , the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE in the presence of said compound;

detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ , wherein lack of an increase in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound does not cause an increase in the level of said ECE; and

determining the anti-hypertension activity of said compound.

~~7~~ ~~12~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~11~~<sup>6</sup>, wherein the anti-hypertension activity of said compound is determined in an animal. ~~7~~

8 ~~13~~. (Original) The method of claim ~~12~~, wherein said animal is a spontaneously hypersensitive rat (SHR).

12 ~~14~~. (Currently Amended) A method of determining that an anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound does not cause an increase in the level of A $\beta$ , wherein said anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound is an ECE inhibitor, the method comprising:

contacting A $\beta$  with an ECE in the presence of said anti-hypertension compound or candidate compound; and

detecting the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$ ,

wherein the lack of an increase in the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the presence of said compound compared to the amount of unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  produced in the absence of said compound is an indication that said compound does not cause an increase in the level of said ECE.

15-39 (Canceled)

2

5 40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein said cell is selected from the group consisting of H4 neuroglioma cells, CHO cells, and HUVEC cells.

4 41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

7

11 42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected in said animal.

6

9 43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

12

10 44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

12

13 45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected using an immunoassay.

12

14 46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said unhydrolyzed A $\beta$  is detected in an animal.

14

16 47. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 46, wherein said animal is a SHR.

15 48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said compound is selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, a polypeptide, a chemical compound, a bacterial extract, a fungal extract, and a plant extract.

12